



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Volunteer Job Description

Title: Midewin Restoration Assistant

Purpose: Assist Midewin's Ecologist, Horticulturist, Botanist and Invasive Species Specialist with natural areas restoration and management on the nation's largest tallgrass prairie restoration effort. Restoration assistants help directly with part one of our mission to conserve, restore, and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants. Native biodiversity must be protected and restored because there is only 0.01% prairie habitat left in Illinois (The Prairie State).

Duties and Responsibilities: Restoration assistant's responsibilities may include the following:

- Planting native plugs in habitat restoration areas or production seedbeds
- Harvesting seed at the production seedbeds or wild populations on Midewin's remnants or local preserves
- Cleaning seed using manual techniques and/or machines
- Remove/control invasive vegetation
- Transporting tender young plants into and out of winter storage
- Soil preparation, mixing and filling trays
- Weeding and/or mulching the production seedbeds
- Applying herbicide if licensed through Dept of Agriculture
- Assisting with greenhouse management such as transplanting and caring for seedlings
- Preparing batches of prairie seed mixes for broadcasting in restoration areas

Department and Location: Under the direction of Midewin's Ecologist, Horticulturist, Botanist and/or Invasive Species Specialist, restoration assistants may have several jobs within Midewin's Restoration Department. Meeting locations are at the River Road Seedbeds or the Horticulture Building at Midewin's Supervisor's Office (SO). Restoration assistants may caravan to various work sites on Midewin, including restored areas and remnant native habitats.

Qualifications: Restoration assistants are responsible for their own transportation to workdays. Restoration assistants should be prepared for variable weather, uneven terrain, and hazardous insects and plants. Restoration assistants should be flexible, cooperative and have the ability to work as a team and/or individually. Previous experience with restoration is not required for most of the activities above. Children of all ages can assist with seed harvesting at the production seedbeds. Children ages 7 and up can assist with any activities listed above in the first column. Some activities are handicap accessible such as planting seed trays, seed cleaning and some aspects of seed harvest.

Time Commitment: Restoration workdays are typically scheduled for 5-6 hours each on alternating Thursdays and Saturdays. These are posted on the 'Calendar of Events' on Midewin's website. Punctuality is necessary for workdays that take place in remote or locked areas. Giving the Volunteer Coordinator at least one-day notice of attendance will allow better accommodation for individuals. Groups of 10 or more must RSVP two weeks in advance.

Midewin encourages restoration assistants to participate, at minimum, once every season in order to further appreciate seed processing, invasive management and prairie restoration.

Training: Each workday will begin with an orientation to Midewin's history, mission, challenges and accomplishments. Instructions and safety information for each specific activity will be explained at every workday, throughout the day.

Working Conditions/Physical Effort: Safety gear, equipment, tools, materials and water will be provided by Midewin. *Restoration assistants are covered by the Volunteer Agreement (Form 301a) only during scheduled shifts.* Restoration assistants may work in variable conditions including:

- Exposure to outdoor weather conditions & allergens
- May be working near hazardous plants or insects
- Walking on uneven ground
- Using a variety of hand tools and possibly some small power tools
- Standing for up to 2 hours or more at a time
- Light to moderate lifting

Benefits: Working outside is a pleasant activity and is very therapeutic. The activities listed above are appropriate for families and individuals of all ages to work together. Midewin's volunteer staff receives ongoing recognition from their supervisor and other staff. Volunteers that contributed 6 or more hours are invited to an annual volunteer recognition banquet in November. Midewin's volunteer staff receives the bimonthly Prairie Telegraph. Volunteers may be featured in the telegraph, newspaper articles and/or US Forest Service success stories. Awards can be received for outstanding, innovative and/or long term, core volunteers.

Volunteer Coordinator Contact: Allison Cisneros at (815) 423-2149

Volunteer Initials: _____

Date: _____